

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 LAB-06 DRC-01 IO-14 OMB-01

CIEP-02 /143 W

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R 181146Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9061

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA, ELAB, LE

SUBJECT: UAW PRESIDENT VISITS LEBANON

REF: STATE 136550

SUMMARY: UAW PRESIDENT WOODCOCK'S VISIT WAS LANDMARK
OCCASION FOR LEBANESE LABOR MOVEMENT, COMING AT A TIME WHEN
LOCAL TRADE-UNIONISTS, FOR FIRST TIME IN YEARS, FEEL FREE TO DEVELOP
INTIMATE TIES WITH U.S. LABOR. END SUMMARY.

1. JULY 13-15 VISIT TO LEBANON BY UNITED AUTOMOBILE WORKERS (UAW)
PRESIDENT LEONARD WOODCOCK AND UAW INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AIDE
HERMAN REBHAN (NEWLY ELECTED SECGEN OF INTERNATIONAL METALWORKERS
FEDERATION-IMF) PROVIDED TIMELY SHOW OF U.S. LABOR ATTENTION TO
HISTORICALLY FRIENDLY LEBANESE TRADE-UNIONISTS.

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2. ALTHOUGH BRIEF AND LARGELY FALLING ON WEEKEND, 36-HOUR STOP-

OVER GAVE VISITORS OPPORTUNITY TO MEET SEPARATELY WITH OFFICERS OF TWO LEBANESE IMF AFFILIATES (WHO HOSTED PROGRAM, INCLUDING SUNDAY SIGHTSEEING) AND WITH GROUP OF FEDERATION PRESIDENTS.

3. DESCRIBING VISIT AS EXPRESSION OF UAW INTEREST IN IMPROVING TIES WITH ARAB UNIONS AND AS EFFORT TO GAIN FIRSTHAND APPRECIATION OF MIDDLE EAST AND ITS PROBLEMS, WOODCOCK WON WARM RESPONSE ON BOTH SCORES. CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM LABOR LEADERS ALIKE WELCOMED STEPPED-UP US-LEBANESE LABOR CONTACTS AND REPEATEDLY THANKED WOODCOCK FOR "MORAL SUPPORT" HIS VISIT PROVIDED THEM IN FIGHT AGAINST RADICAL FORCES.

4. RE ME, LEBANESE PRAISED CURRENT US POLICY ACTIONS AND CALLED FOR CONTINUING AMERICAN EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. THEY ENDORSED UAW OBJECTIVE OF DEVELOPING TIES WITH OTHER ARAB UNIONS AND TACITLY ACCEPTED WOODCOCK'S STATEMENT THAT UAW WOULD CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN CLOSE TIES WITH ISRAEL (AS ONE LABOR LEADER PUT IT: "ISRAEL IS YOUR PROBLEM. WE SIMPLY ASK YOU TO ADOPT UNBIASED VIEW TOWARD ARABS:").

5. COMMENT: VISIT WAS UNQUESTIONABLY LANDMARK IN US-LEBANESE LABOR RELATIONS THAT WILL BE LONG REMEMBERED BY LOCAL TRADE-UNIONISTS. ALTHOUGH CONFEDERATION PRESIDENT GABRIEL KHOURY, WHO IS HOSPITALIZED WITH HEART CONDITION, WAS UNABLE TO MEET VISITORS, HIS COLLEAGUES WHO ECHOED WHAT KHOURY HAD TOLD LABATT ONE WEEK AGO--NAMELY THAT ARAB WORLD CONSTRAINTS THAT HAD LONG INHIBITED LEBANESE LABOR'S OVERT EXPRESSION OF PRO-US ENTIMENT HAVE BEEN LIFTED AND LEBANESE TRADE-UNIONISTS ARE NOW OPENLY DESIROUS OF DEVELOPING INTIMATE TIES WITH AMERICANS.

DECON 7/18/75.
GODLEY

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